

The New York Times _____
 The Washington Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today _____
 The Chicago Tribune _____
Boston Globe P. 14
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Press and its sources

Several weeks ago, the media discovered to its surprise that it had been used. The State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy, it was revealed, had been facilitating the publication of contra propaganda pieces in the nation's leading newspapers. Earlier this year, a State Department spokesman resigned when it was discovered that the US government had used an obedient US media to disseminate disinformation about Libya.

Now we read of the ballyhoo about Bob Woodward's recent book chronicling his curious relationship with the late William Casey, director of the CIA. In light of experience, are we really supposed to believe unquestioningly that the nation's shrewdest spymaster had an inexplicable three-year lapse of judgment that resulted in his granting over four dozen interviews to a man who would seem to be his archenemy? Or shouldn't we just assume by now that the benefits of the relationship were mutual: that the CIA's favor was diplomatically repaid by Woodward and The Washington Post?

This is a symptom of a larger problem: the media has become far too uncritical in covering the news. Journalists routinely



Eleanor Mill illustration

Woodward and Casey had mutual needs.

parrot the government line on such issues as Central America, the Middle East and terrorism.

Reporters have become too concerned with currying favor with power rather than undressing it; the kind of cozy symbiotic relationship that Woodward enjoyed with Casey (done under the dubious guise of "investigative" journalism) is only the most recent example of this.

DAVID GOODMAN
Jamaica Plain